

NATIONAL DEFENSE FELLOW PROGRAM

AIR UNIVERSITY

THE WAR OF THE TIGER AND THE ELEPHANT  
When the Military and the Media Collide

BY

Thomas R. O'Boyle  
Colonel(s), USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO AIR UNIVERSITY

IN

FULLFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULM REQUIRMENT

NAVAL POST GRADUATE SCHOOL, Monterey, Ca  
Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict Curriculum

April 2000

20010921 129

DISTRIBUTION A:

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Air Force Fellows Program  
Maxwell AFB, Al 36112

## DISCLAIMER

This study represents the views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official opinions of the National Defense University or the Air University or the Dept of the Air Force. This is not copyrighted material, but is the property of the US Government.

## ABSTRACT

TITLE: The War between the Elephant and the Tiger: When the Military and the Media Collide.

AUTHOR: Thomas R. O'Boyle, Colonel(s), USAF

This paper describes myths about military operations, how they get started and the harm they can do. It looks at the role of the media; in Vietnam, El Salvador, Mexico and Kosovo and conveys to the reader a greater understanding of the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century media and identifies strategies for military leaders to consider as they impact with the media..

The conflict between the military and the media is longstanding and uncomfortable for both, as both depend on each other to accomplish their respective missions. The military can't afford to retreat from media assaults by dismissing them as the enemy or insignificant to the process. The media while not friendly in the short run is not the enemy in the long run, nor is it insignificant-ever. At times, a proper media strategy may be a persistent attack on elements of the media spreading false or factually inaccurate stories. It may mean seeking out competitors and giving exclusive interviews to accomplish this. Myths must be killed early on or they will generate lives of their own. Military leaders need to understand myth creation and what to do about it. This paper advocates some ways to do that.

Finally, as the media is changing technically (through 24 hour news cycles and Internet web services) and substantively (through less accurate reporting), so must the tools and resources available to senior military leaders to deal with them. Enemies and adversaries understand the press and how to manipulate them. So must the military. This paper proposes a few ideas on organizational changes which might further that cause. In the end, a reader should come away with the view that a healthy and respectful military-media relationship, may have to be somewhat combative.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel(s) Thomas R. O'Boyle is a native of Topeka, Ks. He graduated from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism and entered the Air Force as a graduate Officer Training School in 1980. Following undergraduate pilot training (helicopter) at Ft. Rucker, Alabama, he flew Air Force Rescue HH-53's at Woodbridge, RAF in the UK. He spent the next 7 ½ years at Hurlburt Field, Florida, flying the MH-53 Pave Low Helicopter, for in the 20<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron and 1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Wing.

Colonel(s) O'Boyle flew combat missions in both Just Cause and Desert Storm. In 1990 he was awarded the Military Airlift Command's "Pilot of the Year" trophy. In Desert Storm he was also the lone special operations planner in the "Black Hole" air campaign planning cell. Previous to this assignment, he was the Commander of the 551<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron at Kirtland, AFB, NM.

Colonel(s) O'Boyle is a 1994 graduate of the Naval War College's Command and Staff College and a 1999 Graduate of Air War College by seminar. He holds masters degree's in International Relations from Troy State University and National Military Strategy and Policy from the NWC.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	iv
SECTIONS	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II MEDIA BY ASSERTION NOT VERIFICATION.....	2
Stolen Valor.....	3
Agent Orange.....	9
El Salvador.....	10
Zapatista's and Netwar.....	11
15,000 ft Myth.....	15
III MYTHS DON'T DIE.....	20
A life of their own.....	20
George Magazine.....	21
Destroy a Village to Save It.....	24
IV NEW REALITIES.....	26
24 Hour News Cycle.....	26
Covering War Live.....	29
The Media Manipulated .....	31
Asymmetric Attacks.....	33
V WAR OF THE TIGER AND THE ELEPHANT.....	35
Counterattack—The Info Warrior.....	35
Relief Pitcher Required.....	37
Respond Now.....	38
Organizational Change.....	39
Credibility At All Costs.....	40
VI CONCLUSIONS.....	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44

## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION

Myths are more powerful than ever today. Gossip spreads at an unheard of rate through the new technologies. The media is under the gun as never before to fill a vacuum of broadcast and print time. Military members see the media as purveyors of myth and inaccurate perceptions. Often, they do so for good reason. But just as military people are outraged when the one, unsightly blemish becomes the whole story, it is not fair to blame the press for every myth it perpetuates. In the absence of the real story, any story adequately fills the void. The military has a poor record of persistence in killing myths. It has been righteous in thinking they will die on their own. They won't. This paper discusses some popular military myths whose creation were driven by media biases, a voracious appetite for news and military unwillingness to respond openly or expeditiously to media queries. It will expose some commonly held misperceptions about what happened in Vietnam, El Salvador, Chiapas (Mexico) and Kosovo. These cases significantly link the past with the present, both technologically and politically.

Initially, this paper will seem very critical of parts of the media. There is much to be critical of. But the military's hands are not clean either. By not aggressively refuting myths, providing access or engaging the press, the military has fanned some of these fires. I will propose some strategies for mitigating this semi-adversarial relationship, hoping to prove the only sure way to lose the media battle, is to not fight it at all. A myth, once created, is a formidable weapon. The press can be an ally in the information war, but they must be understood, engaged and assured that the military is a credible partner. The press will rush to the fire, but the military needs to be there with the water.

## SECTION II

### MEDIA by ASSERTION not VERIFICATION

In any war myths are created. Whether of battlefield valor or cowardly performance, war is a horrible chronicler of the truth. Name the conflict and you can find a myth. Most of the time, persistent historians eventually get to the bottom, correct the record and the truth wins out. But that was a time where information moved more slowly. Despite the greatest availability of information in the history of the world, the truth stands a greater chance than ever of being hidden. In today's rapid fire information-based society inaccurate reporting, uncontested, can easily create lingering myths. The damage to society can be profound. Myths from Vietnam have proved such a case. What's your image of the Vietnam Vet? Are they productive, well-adjusted and affluent members of society? Or are they bound to be homeless, drug addicted and unemployed? Are they victims poisoned by Agent Orange and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), one step away from a killing spree? What about America's Central American involvement during the 1980s? Did Americans help kill nuns and oppress a popular political movement in El Salvador. When the Peso crashed in Mexico, wasn't that the result of a peasant uprising that almost took over the country? How about in Kosovo, did American pilots wantonly drop bombs on innocent civilians, flying from altitudes they knew wouldn't be effective? What impressions did you walk away with from the information faucet with? How were they formed? Were they accurate? If not, why not? Most important of all, are they harmless inaccuracies or pervasive distortions that might never die?



## STOLEN VALOR

A recent book by authors B.K. Burkett and Glenna Whitley, *Stolen Valor*, (recent winners of the William Colby award for new writings in military history) detail the creation of a number of myths regarding the Vietnam War. Some might say this is another case of the military blaming the press for losing the war. It really has nothing to do with that. It is about the destructive force of unfounded myths, how they linger and what they destroy. "Stolen Valor" is not just about the "destruction of honor" for a generation of Vietnam Veterans, but the powerful, enduring legacy of myth left as a result. If you believe that Vietnam Vets are more likely to be drug ridden, unstable, homeless or unemployed you would be wrong. If you believe the majority of the 58,000 names on the wall, come from the minority laden ranks of 18 year-old draftees or from poor economic backgrounds you would be wrong. If you believe the conflict was accurately reported by the news coverage, you would be wrong. If you believe media biases and competition can drive myth creation you might be right.

JUST THE FACTS -- The average age of men killed in Vietnam was 22.8. Officers died at a higher rate (13.5% vs. 12.5% of all Vietnam military casualties). "The Army lost a higher ratio of its officer corps in Vietnam, than it did in WWII." Volunteers accounted for 77% of combat deaths. 86% of nineteen year-olds and 97% of 18 yr. olds killed, were volunteers.<sup>1</sup> Do you know how many 18-year-old draftees died in Vietnam? Guess: 10,000; maybe 15,000? How about 101. That's right, one hundred and one, 18-yr. old draftees died in Vietnam. The impression that minorities were unevenly drafted and sent to Vietnam to die, is an equally scandalous myth. Less than 1 % of 18yr old draftees that died were black. That's right, seven 18yr old black draftees died in Vietnam.<sup>2</sup>A

confessional piece in Life Magazine dismissing the Vietnam era military as “a fighting force made up largely of minorities and the poor...” was published 20 years after the war in 1990.<sup>3</sup> But it just isn’t true.<sup>4</sup> Five percent of those who died in Vietnam were Hispanic and 12.5% were black, both groups were slightly under their respective representation in society.<sup>5</sup> The poor were also said to have died disproportionately. But, post-war studies have shown that the richest 10% of society were just as likely to have died in Vietnam as any other category. Yale lost 35 graduates to the war from the class of 1968 alone—a rate consistent to the national average.<sup>6</sup> Even, the overall death rate in Vietnam was lower than previous wars, due to better medical capabilities in the field.<sup>7</sup>

The myth created reached far and wide. A Vietnam vet was more likely to graduate from college, more likely to own a home, more likely to be married with children.<sup>8</sup> In a Washington Post poll 74% of Vietnam veterans said they “enjoyed their time in service”. An astounding 91% of those surveyed, were “glad they served their country”.<sup>9</sup> A 1988 study of the Vietnam experience by researchers at the US center for Disease Control found that there was no statistically significant background characteristics between Vietnam and non-Vietnam veterans in regards to race, age, aptitude test scores etc. All of those studied had a pay grade at discharge no higher than E-5. Yet if you just watched TV, the movies or read the paper this is not the opinion you have been left with.<sup>10</sup> Myths have also been created regarding draft-dodging, drug use, and violence prone or psychotic behavior.

A majority of Americans (67%) waited to be drafted rather than join voluntarily during WW II.<sup>11</sup> Less than 35% of Vietnam vets were drafted<sup>12</sup> During Vietnam approximately 10,000 Americans fled to Canada, yet 30,000 Canadians entered the US

military and about 10,000 of those went to Vietnam. <sup>13</sup>“Drug usage among American troops in Vietnam was lower than for American troops stationed anywhere else in the world, including the US.”<sup>14</sup> According to the Vietnam-Era Research Project” drug use was more common among that era’s non-veterans, than veterans. <sup>15</sup> Veterans have always been accused of returning from war with psychotic or criminal minds. Historically it’s always been popular to excite the home crowd when the veterans come back from war. Attorney Clarence Darrow had proclaimed that veterans were “inoculated with universal madness” after WWI and Reporter Bill Mauldin’s classic 1947 WW II book “featured a woman reading the paper to her husband just home from the war. On the front page of the *Daily Dirt* was the headline “Veteran kicks Aunt”. The wife reads: “There’s a small item on page 17 about a triple ax murder. No veterans involved.”<sup>16</sup> A famous reporter, Bill Mauldin wrote “Police records show that WW II veterans committed no more and no fewer crimes in proportion to the rest of the citizenry, and after a while most reputable newspapers stopped headlining veterans every time one got into trouble.” <sup>17</sup>Yet, the Vietnam veteran was portrayed as a “dangerous, drug-abusing, psychopathic criminal...” when they tried to do a survey of Vietnam veterans in prison they couldn’t find a statistically big enough sample.<sup>18</sup>

In August 1986 a man in Edmond Oklahoma went berserk and killed 14 people. It was widely reported by the CBS local affiliate (quick on the scene) that he was a Vietnam veteran. He was not. *The Dallas Morning News* tried to correct the errant TV broadcasts that had been continually reporting Patrick Sherrill’s status as a Vietnam vet. Despite angry calls contrary to their report, until they could verify he wasn’t, they would

continue to assert that he was. Sherrill, though a veteran of the Marine Corps who had served in the mid-60s, had never left the States. As Burkett writes:

“ A terrible irony was never acknowledged by 99% of the journalists who covered the story. Two of the seven men murdered were Vietnam veterans. One of them- Paul Michael Rockne, the grandson of famous Notre Dame coach Knute Rockne, was a decorated war hero, recipient of a Bronze Star Medal. The thing most people remembered about this incident would be those early frantic reports. “*Vietnam Veteran Kills 14*”<sup>19</sup>.

If you want to get a misperception out there, get it out first. If retracted later, people remember what they first heard. Time Magazine put No Gun Ri on the cover, the retraction was a few lines on page 16. The *Dallas Times Herald* did do a story on successful Vietnam era vets, but the editors left out most of the positive statistical data supporting the premise.<sup>20</sup> They weren’t alone.

THE CBS PHENOMENA -- CBS did a documentary on the tragic lives of Vietnam Vets called the “The Wall Within”. Hyped as “14 months in the making” and lauded by the *LA Times* as not the typical documentary; by the *Washington Post* as “Extraordinarily powerful” it supposedly told the story of the debilitating affects of service in Vietnam. With Dan Rather at the mike, saying, “twenty years ago the US military trained young Americans for combat operation in Vietnam, since then a number of these men, haunted by their deeds, became seriously ill.” Then, panning to a vet named Steve saying, “ I think I was one of the highest trained, underpaid, 18 cent-an-hour assassins ever put together by a team of people who knew exactly what they were looking for...” the drama is complete.<sup>21</sup> Later Rather asserts that up to 100,000 vets had been driven to suicide over the Vietnam war. The show followed six vets. Most were apparently like Steve, whom Rather describes as, “at age 16, Steve was a Navy SEAL,

trained to assassinate...for almost two years he operated behind the enemy lines before he broke. He came home in a straitjacket, addicted to alcohol and drugs.”<sup>22</sup> The second “traumatized vet, was a “special forces scout”, hand picked for an elite team after it was found out he “could hit a bull’s eye 98 times of 100 from three hundred yards and track & smell animals from afar.” He was sent alone, into the jungles, by the Marines to track and kill Viet Cong or US deserters, while living off stolen enemy food caches. The second, of the six “victims”, was a 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, “fighting sergeant” claiming to have slaughtered 50 Vietnamese civilians “flaying and stacking them in heaps”. A third, was a Navy deckhand on the USS *Ticonderoga* who witnessed a horrific accident of a man chopped up by a propeller. A fourth, was a Marine who’s combat duty consisted of “walking the point” and transferred his Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) to his wife and kid. The sixth was a true grunt in Vietnam, awarded combat action ribbons and purple hearts.

The first five “tortured vets” were all frauds. The 16 yr. old SEAL assassin was a logistics specialist in the rear area in Vietnam and served months in the brig for five AWOL’s. The “Special Forces scout, assassin, commando, tracker” not only hadn’t served in Vietnam he had washed out of Marine boot camp after 3 months. The fighting sergeant was an ammo handler in the rear area while in Vietnam. During his year in Vietnam and in his following 2 ½ years of service, he spent 300 days either in the brig or AWOL. The flight deck horror victim, was a repairman on the ship where the accident happened and was not anywhere near the incident according to the logs (but still gets a VA check everyday for the “horror” of hearing the story). The seaman, who actually witnessed the fatal accident in the “drama” misreported by Rather, was a completely well

adjusted veteran with a wife and family who never even dreamed of searching out compensation.<sup>23</sup> As author Burkett concludes about the “Wall Within”, “if this had really happened the way 60 Minutes depicted it, why hadn’t CBS done an investigation of the atrocities recorded on tape, there is no statute of limitations.”<sup>24</sup> Could you imagine them not investigating? But who cares about the truth?

The “Wall Within” was acclaimed as an outstanding expose. At a Radio and TV news directors dinner in 1993, Rather chastised his peers for putting up “entertainment and fuzz and wuss” because of ratings. He argued instead, for putting up serious journalism like the “Wall Within.” The press should “be ashamed of what we have and have not done, measured against what we could do.” He lashed out at CBS for it’s Noah’s Ark “discovery” fraud and ridiculed *Dateline NBC* whose producers got caught using tiny rockets to fake a truck crash test,” lamenting: “it could have been us.” Well, it was.<sup>25</sup>

The entire “Wall Within” show was a fraud. Five of the six “servicemen” in the “acclaimed” “docu-drama” participants were frauds. It wasn’t that CBS had been expertly duped, they hadn’t done even the minimum amount of background checks on the wild exaggerations of these five fraudulent individuals. Hardly anything was as it was presented. Facts used were grossly misrepresented or fabricated. The director of the Veterans Administration at the time, Thomas K. Turnage, condemned CBS saying:

“...by your unfounded exaggeration and by presenting several of the most unfortunate individuals you could find, CBS left no doubt you intended to have the public believe--‘These are your veterans of Vietnam’. There is absolutely no justification for CBS to leave such an impression with the American public.”

It seems they had decided what the story was, before they ever left New York.<sup>26</sup>

It was the “General Westmoreland” expose’ all over again.<sup>27</sup>

## AGENT ORANGE

When a *NY Times* reporter did a story on the exposure of the Agent Orange Myth, he came under attack by the American Journalism Review<sup>28</sup>. “In June 1996, President Clinton, announced that his administration was extending veteran’s compensation (for Agent Orange) to all Vietnam troops who (in the future) contract prostate cancer, a disease that as many as one out of five, will contract in their lifetime. This despite, the fact that the National Academy of Sciences “found only suggestive evidence” of a casual link.”<sup>29</sup> Agent Orange “poisoned millions during the Vietnam War and was a Pulitzer Prize winning story by the *Baltimore Sun*. CBS did a story, “Agent Orange, the Deadly Fog,” *The NY Times* and *Washington Post* ran numerous stories. In most of these, veterans interviewed talk about the “orange powder” or “orange liquid” raining down on them. Many follow-up stories were run on the tragic tales of veterans succumbing to cancer, due to Agent Orange (it was colorless and called “orange” because of an Orange strip on the barrels).

The truth is much different. A study of the US Air Force’s Ranch Hand unit, “the most highly decorated Air Force squadrons of the war”, tells a different story. With a celebrated aircraft named “patches” (which had been hit by 800 rounds of enemy fire-- nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the units aircraft suffered ground fire hits) the “Ranch Handers” had a glorious past.<sup>30</sup> Of the 1016 “Ranch Handers” followed in a 1987 study, using a control group of 1293, these airman, had no greater incident of lethal cancers than anyone else. These veterans had been literally soaked in the colorless liquid defoliant called Agent Orange, after bladders took hits during missions. Most had even drunk the stuff during their initiation ritual (where each new arrival “had to drink a cup of the herbicide, with

the veterans drinking right along side”). These individuals whom had been by far, the most exposed of anyone, have a lower mortality rate than the country’s entire male population. The only disease out of the ordinary is a 50% increase in usually non-fatal basal cell carcinomas (thought to be caused by sun exposure not chemicals) and even this rate is coming down as more people their age develop these exposure-related complications.<sup>31</sup> A recent report by the Surgeon General show’s a slightly higher incidence of juvenile diabetes, but even that report shows it as inconclusive. There were many other myths resulting from the Vietnam War, these are but a few.<sup>32</sup> Myths created with the help of the media are of course not restricted to Vietnam. What is your impression of US involvement in El Salvador. Did we help or hurt? Win or Lose?

#### EL SALVADOR

During a time of upheaval and terrorism all over Europe and the Middle East, the United States was also involved in a conflict in its own backyard of Central America. President Reagan’s objective was to stop the spread of communism. Fear of “another Vietnam” had led to extensive lobbying efforts by foes of American intervention in Central America. A 55-man limit on U.S. advisors assisting the government of El Salvador against an insurgent Marxist guerilla force was imposed.<sup>33</sup> The restriction did have the unintended consequence of keeping the numbers low in country and forcing US advisors to be resourceful. Colonel Joe Andrade, a former advisor in El Salvador said, “This in turn kept us underneath the media’s radar for the large part and allowed us to be effective.”



The press was considered a combatant force by many of the advisors, which caused many unintended consequences. It was alleged by US advisors, as well as Mark Pedelty, an anthropologist and author of the book, "War Stories", that human rights groups manipulated the press to falsely attribute stories of massacres to government forces.<sup>34</sup> Colonel Andrade said the FMLN had manipulated the press to a point, it seemed, the press were just waiting to erect a monument to the 1<sup>st</sup> US soldier killed in combat in El Salvador--as a way of blowing the whole policy.<sup>35</sup>

World events, competing for press coverage really helped keep the media juggernaut at bay in El Salvador, according to Colonel Andrade. When right-wing death squads murdered five Jesuit priests, the media coverage got swamped by the media feeding frenzy over the invasion of Panama (which had happened a month later). Had it not been for Panama, the incident could easily have led to a windfall of coverage for the guerillas. The government of El Salvador never told their story to the international community. But the FMLN story was beamed to the world. It was a successful manipulation of human rights groups that made it easy.

While the government of El Salvador failed to garner international support and looked too much inwardly, the FMLN guerillas did the opposite. Focusing primarily on international support (NGOs, Mary knolls, Jesuits, *Christian Science Monitor*), the FMLN failed to recognize their biggest failing was getting popular support within the country. Despite overwhelming international sympathy, without internal popular support they were doomed to failure. One story erroneously reported by the press was on U.S. mines given to El Salvador. The US did not provide any mines to El Salvador. Nor did it train them in their use, according to Colonel Andrade. They only trained them on how to

remove and disarm them. The FMLN's mine campaign made 10,000 amputees in the country, yet the impression was allowed to exist that it was the government's fault. Media were biased and just didn't want to hear a good news story from a right-wing dictatorship.<sup>36</sup>

European coverage was very anti-Salvadoran government and anti-American. A story of the execution of two American helicopter pilots was told very differently in the U.S. press than the European press. While the U.S. press had fairly straight coverage, the European press was very sympathetic to the FMLN. They mitigated the barbarousness of the acts, by reporting about previous executions by a right-wing death squad.<sup>37</sup>

Power of the NGO's -- Many "do-gooders" came down to El Salvador, most for legitimate humanitarian concerns (which they learned about through the press). Some were doctors from the US who came to operate on amputees and provide prosthetics—a noble cause. But, they never told the story of the mines and where they came from. Some, like the IRC, were actively involved in supporting the FMLN's combat operations. Colonel Andrade said, "The International Red Cross were essentially medics for the FMLN."<sup>38</sup> US advisors finally put it together, when they tracked where the Red Cross had been and found in nearly every instance a battle took place the next day. The guerrillas merely maneuvered the Red Cross where they were going to attack. "I personally saw the Red Cross refuse to treat wounded government soldiers".

The NGOs were often pawns for the "bad guys". They built houses for displaced people, but only in guerrilla occupied areas. The NGO's apparently used internally consistent logic. Their first question to US military advisors, when they encountered them, was always "Why are you supporting the repression of the Salvadoran people".<sup>39</sup>

The press in many cases were willing participants. Though much was reported correctly in El Salvador much was not. The reality was El Salvador turned out to be a victory for American policy. The guerrillas never had the support of the majority of the Salvadoran people and because of that ultimately failed. The real story just never got out. The NGO's had picked a side, but were too naïve to realize it.<sup>40</sup> It was a missed opportunity for the government of El Salvador and the backers of the U.S. policy. The existence of the death squads made this possible.

#### ZAPATISTAS and NETWAR

The EZLN was a small-localized guerilla movement in a remote region of Mexico. In 1994, it broke out of its small autonomous zone using military and information operations aimed at the media. The result was immediate damage to the value of Mexico's currency and its stock market plummeted (ultimately costing the American taxpayer \$50 billion in financial bailout guaranty costs). A province in flames, a fragile Mexican government in chaos, Indians being slaughtered, this was the picture beamed to Mexico's investors through the media. The problem is, it never happened. The truth had been morphed. How did it happen?

The EZLN, as described by authors of a book entitled, *The Zapatista and Social Netwar in Mexico*, were:

“Like the natives in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century against the Spanish Conquistadors, their deficiency in firepower drove the Indians to innovate, even diverge from their own military traditions. Thus, the ‘Mexico’ themselves were fighting a different kind of war...”<sup>41</sup>

The Zapatista's in Chiapas, Mexico initially tried to run the "war of the flea" a traditional Mao-inspired communist insurgency. The EZLN commenced hostilities on January 1 1994.<sup>42</sup> Much like their ancestors, the Zapatistas were prepared to take on what they considered the modern-day conquistadors in a new form of warfare. While their "war of the flea" was running into trouble, an alarmed mass of Mexican and transnational Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) activists mobilized and descended on Chiapas and Mexico City, in "swarm networks".<sup>43</sup> The Zapatistas saw how easy it was to manipulate the media and the international community to draw support to their cause. They changed tactics completely. They became whatever anyone (supporting them) wanted them to be. Sub-Comandante Marcos, (their leader) "succeeded in adapting the EZLN's world views to those of the Maya".<sup>44</sup> By making good use of computerized conferencing, e-mail, fax and telephones (all in 1994), they generated press conferences and rallies aimed at pressuring the Mexican government.<sup>45</sup> These "activists worked to assure that the insurrection became and remained an international media event—swollen by the "CNN effect"—so that the EZLN and its views were portrayed favorably".<sup>46</sup> They adapted their overt goals to fit the various groups supporting them. This "Social Netwar" (coined by the authors of *The Zapatista and Social Netwar in Mexico*) was a war of manipulation of NGOs, international media and public opinion by the Internet savvy leader of the "EZLN", Sub-Comandante Marcos.<sup>47</sup>

Where "conventional" guerilla war strategy faltered or failed, the media weapon had become very effective. The Zapatista's netwar strategy was effective in preventing the government from crushing them at the outset.<sup>48</sup> "A shift from guerrilla warfare to social netwar occurred"<sup>49</sup>. "The Zapatista movement gained an unprecedented

transnational presence on the Net ...without this on-line presence, the 'EZLN would not have been able to resist the onslaught of the Mexican state so successfully over the last four years." <sup>50</sup> The Zapatistas' were not the only guerilla groups manipulating NGO's and international media, they were just the most effective over-all.<sup>51</sup>

The Zapitista's, like the N. Vietnamese decades early, had bought a truce with public opinion and media manipulation, giving them time to reorganize and rearm. The lesson here is, the military must be aware of changes in the information environment. Ignorance of the political and international public opinion elements (because of a narrow focus on military operations) could cause illogical or unacceptable restraints on military strategies, ultimately jeopardizing the lives of military personnel. In Mexico, the "netwar" concept put the military in a position of not knowing whether to fight or repair its image. <sup>52</sup> Not knowing whether to attack or retreat, and "stung by the media", the Mexican Army also seemed alienated from the government. The same government who had ordered them to fight, later, on two occasions, ordered them to cease and desist for political reasons—both at a time when military logic called for resolute offensive action to bring the uprising to a close". <sup>53</sup> The myth the Zapatistas created drove the Army from the field. It nearly lost the province, despite the fact that most of the "war" was a complete fabrication done by media exploitation of public and international opinion. This could easily have been the case in Kosovo.

### No Gun Ri

When the Associated Press's Sang-Hun Choe, Charles J. Hanley, and Martha Mendoza published their "Pulitzer Prize" winning articles on a "massacre" of civilians by

U.S. soldiers at a bridge in Korea called No Gun Ri, it hit the media like a Force 5 hurricane. Almost immediately it was in all the media; newspapers, TV broadcasts and internet web sites. Instant world-wide dissemination, it was the story of a life time. Unfortunately, they're going to have to give the Pulitzer's back, because as of this date, it just didn't happen (at least not the way they and most of the others in the media reported). They didn't do their homework. In the rush to get a story out, they failed to check the reliability of their key sources. This wasn't just a simple mistake, these were "eyewitnesses" to an atrocity committed by U.S. forces.. You would think before such damaging allegations were aired that a professional journalist would have taken the time to check out whether the men saying it happened, were at least actually there at the time. As it turns out, they weren't. None of the soldiers they said "heard" the orders or shot the civilians were actually there. With Joseph L. Galloway of *U.S. News and World Report*, leading the charge, the exposers were exposed. Galloway, along with the *Stars and Stripes* reporter Ed Offley, may have the legitimate Pulitzer Prize winning story. Galloway did what the others did not. He checked. He filed a Freedom of Information request for their service records and found they weren't who they said they were. The most damaging revelation was that "star" witness to the atrocity, Edward Daily. He not only wasn't a machine gunner at the massacre, he wasn't a machine gunner at all. He was a clerk in the motor pool and he wasn't anywhere near the massacre site.<sup>54</sup> This is the same guy that dateline NBC flew over to Korea to embrace victims. He perpetrated other frauds too. He didn't win the DSC or get a battlefield commission as he said. Like the president of the Antietam survivors association a generation early, he pretended he was there. His lie had entwined itself to the point he became part of the written history of

the Korean War. He was even president of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association as a result of his exploits. He was a phony. So were most of the others that the AP used to corroborate their allegations. The ones that weren't were so mis-quoted they refuse to talk to them and are filing legal actions.

The AP reporters just couldn't be bothered to wait six weeks for the FOIA to come back verifying these horrific accounts. It was too important they not get scooped. Yet it was a hatchet job on the honor of the U.S. Military. Could a massacre have happened? It's quite possible. Yet, we know it didn't happen the way these frauds said it did. When confronted, the fraudulent witnesses said their memories weren't too good and they had been sick, etc. The real unfortunate thing is that it wasn't DOD that blew the story out of the water, it was the press. Reminiscent of "Tailwind" (where outraged veterans took it upon themselves to refute CNN scandalous allegations that nerve gas was used in Vietnam by the U.S.) a lackadaisical response by DOD (while it did its own investigation) was a day late and a dollar short. The story played in the media for months. Why? DOD had the social security numbers and the US Governments personnel records center in St. Louis, Mo. at its finger-tips. Why couldn't some phone calls have been made immediately verifying the service of these individuals?

The AP refuses to give up and apologize. Time did. Its' cover story article was recanted on page 16 a couple issues later. Dateline NBC, like others, offered muted, embarrassed responses. They certainly didn't get the air time the initial allegations did. As late as June 7<sup>th</sup> the AP were still running stories saying it could have happened.<sup>55</sup> But their article just talks about an "alleged" memo uncovered by Army investigators linking Air Force aircraft to strafing civilians. This same memo was used in their initial story.

If the memo was in the Archives as they allege why don't they have it? They never mention who wrote it, what units were involved or who said what. If it was in the archives any reporter worth their salt would have that kind of data in their articles. It would be there. They are simply trying to cover their rear ends.

The poignant testimony of these fake veterans captured the nation's interest. Here they were on national TV attesting to participating in a massacre. Why would they lie. As Burkitt, contends in his book, "you just don't know, they have all kinds of reasons; failed lives, loneliness, or mental illness all play a part".<sup>56</sup> But what professional responsibility does the press have to verify not just assert? Bottomline, some of the press didn't act responsibly. It affects us all.

#### 15,000 ft Myth

Much has been made of the recent war in Kosovo (and Serbia) about civilian deaths and casualties. There have been debates about the number of civilians killed and headlines about war crimes<sup>57</sup>. Presidential candidates have taken the administration to task and the services have had very public squabbles over the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the tactics; specifically related to the "airpower only" course chosen by NATO and the US administration. This has spawned a phenomena call the "15,000 ft myth" and could be every bit as damaging down the road as the myths "left alone" on the "battlefield" a generation earlier in Vietnam.

The premise of the myth is that American and NATO governments were casualty averse and used airpower as a result. That much may be true. But from this spread the tentacles of myth. It spread to the aircraft being restricted to higher altitudes to avoid risk



to airmen. Encircling the victim, the myth asserts that from this higher altitude, aircrews really couldn't see what they were bombing and subsequently killed lots of civilians--unnecessarily. Hence the 15,000ft myth. It has been talked about in newspapers, magazines and on television. Recently, presidential candidate Senator John McCain, even referred to it during an interview on "Larry King Live" on CNN. A recent series by Newsweek alleges a cover-up over the effectiveness of airpower.<sup>58</sup>

As previous myths have shown, military myths tend to be fertile ground for journalists. The 15,000 ft myth could eventually be one of the most productive ever. It is asymmetrical warfare directed at one our most powerful weapons—airpower. The Newsweek article asserts Airpower wasn't effective. If key political decision makers are swayed by such reports, maybe it won't be authorized in subsequent Kosovo or similar scenarios. Hence, one of this nations most effective military instruments is off the table.

Finding the exact origins of any myth is nearly impossible and often doesn't matter.<sup>59</sup> Once the horse is out of the gate, it will run hard. *The Long Island Newsday*, May 16, 1999 argued that the Kosovo bombing campaign was immoral because targeting infrastructure put non-combatants at risk. If morality can be called into question, so can then can effectiveness. Mr. Simon Jenkins of the *London Times*, expressed his "loathing" of strategic bombing by declaring the air campaign in Allied Force to be illegal, immoral and only marginally effective.<sup>60</sup> Others used it to feed their arguments on the immorality of bombing in general. Norman Mailer wrote in the *Washington Post* (24 May 99) "Bombing is different, it is immoral. Ground war is always cruel, beyond human comprehension... If the bombing is done with the notion that our own blood is not to be shed, it is obscene"<sup>61</sup> These myths (reported in *The Air War over Kosovo*) are sadly,

“class B reruns” of the Desert Storm debate. These were the same types of voices, that said PGM’s and stealth didn’t work. [In fact PGMs and Stealth were such a failure, the B-2’s were the first weapons over the targets in the Kosovo campaign]. But they exist none-the-less, like the much talked about “highway of death” myth from Desert Storm, which was a smattering of truth, blown way out of proportion for sensational aims and questionable motives.<sup>62</sup>

A recent Proceedings article, raised the issue of the ineffectiveness of bombing from 15,000 feet. The article appeared to be trying to take the current administration to task over its policy (no casualties and air only) fed off the “15,000 ‘myth of ineffectiveness’ as a way to show the policy was wrong-headed. But in doing so he alluded to an air force of risk-averse “part-timers” who, though ineffective at that altitude, would knowingly drop inaccurate munitions anyway, recklessly killing women and children, just to stay out of harm’s way. These types of faulty analogies, fed of inaccurate reporting allow anyone with an agenda to assert that striking women and children at all, let alone from the “wanton” height of 15,000 ft., must certainly be a reckless policy. This is an asymmetric attack on a potent U.S. weapon. What will be next, SLBM’s, SDI, BMD?

Some have said not getting close to your adversary was wrong. But is flying at altitudes to minimize risk (as long as effectiveness doesn’t suffer) immoral? Is it cowardly? If an armor column comes upon a road mined or a mine field, surely it goes around it, if it can and still get to the objective. What irresponsible commander would just drive through it sacrificing the lives of those in the ranks?

But these questions have now entered the debate. It was exactly Senator McCain's point, an administration willing to recklessly kill women and children. In his interview the Senator said:

"I will never take a poll. In the most obscene chapter in recent American history is the conduct of the Kosovo conflict when the president of the United States refused to prepare for ground operations, **refused to have air power used effectively because he wanted them flying -- he had them flying at 15,000 feet** where they killed innocent civilians because they were dropping bombs from such in high altitude."

As Air Force Colonel Wade McRoberts writes, "For old A-4 pilots like McCain, for whom boring down on the target in a dive separated the men from the boys, the persistence of the myth denigrates the fearlessness shown by our combat pilots. They need to know that we are just GOOD, not overly careful."<sup>63</sup>

Of course it didn't happen. Bombing from 15,000ft didn't increase collateral damage, it lessened it. Unfortunately, like in the Vietnam and El Salvador examples, unrefuted myths become legend, then become fact and finally, become history. In an Oct 3, 1999 article by Craig R. Whitney wrote in the New York Times:

"Bombing from 15,000 ft so that they would not be shot down, allied pilots on April 14 killed Albanian refugees fleeing in a convoy mixed in with Serbian armored vehicles. Consequently to avoid further risk of civilian casualties, pilots were ordered not to target such vehicles when they were mixed up with civilian traffic. And one result was that Serbian force could continue laying waste to Kosovo." Pg 1.

The 15,000ft Myth Extinguished--A fire left on the stove to burn, will quickly consume the whole house. In refuting the 15,000 ft myth, one only has to reflect on William Pfaff's article in the *International Herald Tribune*, "NATO Committed No War Crimes In Bombing Yugoslavia", on January 24, 2000. Pfaff wrote:

"Civilians were killed by NATO in Yugoslavia, despite the efforts of the attackers to avoid this, but NATO's bombing campaign was undoubtedly the first in history during which civilians of a capital under fire felt secure enough to hold street parties to watch the bombing and defy the enemy."

This does not sound like indiscriminate bombing, it certainly gives credence to the accuracy issue. It could be alleged that a bus, a train or a bridge could have been indiscriminately targeted—fair enough. They could also be targets hit in the fog of war. But a few targets does not an indiscriminate campaign make. Afraid the 15,000 ft myth will have a life of its own and spawn other false analogies USAF Colonel Jim Callard, writes:

“Once again the United States Air Force is starring in a Rodney Dangerfield monologue, attempting to suggest that the use of aerospace power in Kosovo was a decisive and incredibly potent tool of foreign policy. The analyses done by RAND, AFSA, IRIS and others should prove that the aerospace campaign in Kosovo, like those executed in Bosnia and Desert Storm were benchmarks redefining the American way of war, not a series of anomalies. At the end of the day, locked and loaded with logic, we ought to prevail. The end of the day, however, always seems just out of reach.”<sup>64</sup>

The 15,000ft myth can most easily be refuted both technologically and historically (See Appendix B). Suffice to say it just isn't true. But like previous myths, the facts may not be important to those in need of a story.

Possibly the best refutation of Newsweek assertion of ineffectiveness came from the article in the Air Force Magazine by Stephen P. Aubin on May 19<sup>th</sup>. He said among other important points:

“Gen Corely (who wrote the final after action report) had 200 personnel working 24 hours a day for nine weeks before Clark (Gen Wesley Clark) briefed the international media in September. The results: the team documented successful strikes on 93 tanks, 153 armored personnel carriers and 389 artillery pieces...If anything Corley's team was conservative in its approach. And although the Air Force gave Newsweek correspondent John Barry special access to Corley and his documentation, Barry chose not to let the fact get in the way of reporting his sensational thesis.”<sup>65</sup>

This almost sounds like No Gun Ri. Aubin, goes on to expose the London Times Magazine as well. They used Serbia's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army General as their main source to “expose” the “ineffectiveness” of airpower. This is the same guy who said the shot down 47 NATO aircraft.

The biggest problem with any of these myths, is that they continue to grow off their living hosts, until they consume both them and the truth. Conflicts like Kosovo are a sharpening wheel for those with axes to grind. Today's NGOs are a formidable force on the information highway. Just like the NGOs in the El Salvador and Zapatista examples, an agenda orientated NGO is a prime source of stories to fill any media vacuum. Good, bad or indifferent, NGOs can live or die by media coverage. The Stories they "sponsor" get picked up and reused time and again by the media. NGOs are a force to be reckoned with today. The military must understand who they are and how they operate.

Like the myths about Vietnam Vets, Agent Orange, US military involvement in El Salvador or the Zapatistas Netwar in Mexico, the 15,000ft myth is grounded in elements of the truth. . This is the most dangerous aspect. Crews were restricted to higher altitudes. But, an armor column approaching a minefield will deviate around it due to risk—especially if it can get to the objective another way.<sup>66</sup> If myths are corrected early, they can be refuted more easily. But to do so, understanding the current climate within the media is crucial. It is a foreign environment to most military officers. Riding the white horse and "flying high" used to be considered honorable ways of warfare. That may not only not be the case today--it may be the road to ruin instead. There are many costs to society by unexposed military myths. Precious resources are misallocated, recruiting can be damaged or criminals could be set free. Future wars can be affected.

### CHAPTER III

#### MYTHS DON'T DIE

The struggle to fill the news vacuum will produce more rehashes of old stories. If its not done right the first time, it will forever be done wrong—that's the story on reporting. The cost to society will escalate as each myth grows and is manipulated.

### A LIFE OF THEIR OWN

Remember the Vietnam myths about psychotic veterans and Agent Orange deaths. The, "if those are true then this must also be true", logic can help corrupt old myths and create new ones. In 1991, Tom Zucco of the *St Petersburg Times*, wrote, "more Vietnam veterans have committed suicide than were killed during the war—58,000. But studies show Vietnam vets have a 7% less chance of suicide than non-Vietnam vets.<sup>67</sup> WWII vets are 3 times more likely to commit suicide.<sup>68</sup> This myth was fueled by inaccurate reporting or grandstanding from reports like Dan Rather's, *Wall Within* piece on *60 Minutes* (which claimed between 26,000 to 100,000 veterans of Vietnam have committed suicide).<sup>69</sup> These myths could be having dramatic effect today on everything from misallocation of scarce public funds, to recruiting.

The problem is, every time a reporter on a deadline searches a database looking for statistics on suicide; the myth of suicidal Vietnam vets surfaces. Many will find a fact from, say, 1988 and do their own calculations to update it to the current year. The process continues and feeds the myth. If not being killed by Agent Orange or Gulf War Syndrome, they'll commit suicide, end up homeless or as an alcoholic. Maybe even a criminal.<sup>70</sup> Would you let your son or daughter enter such a corrosive profession?

Criminals Are Free--In 1994 *60 Minutes*' Mike Wallace did a story on the getaway driver of the highly publicized Katherine Ann Power's anti-war protester turned

criminal. Powers was given 5 years, but another suspect, and Vietnam “war hero” got life in prison. With *60 Minutes* pounding the drum, then Gov. Weld of Massachusetts (under pressure from Vietnam vets and the *Boston Globe*) recommended the “war hero’s release. But instead of being a hero of Khe Sanh or Hill 861, as he claimed, he never served in combat at all. He wasn’t a decorated Vietnam vet, but a supply clerk stationed in Kadena, Okinawa. He didn’t serve even one tour in Vietnam.<sup>71</sup> This “war hero” is free today. What about all the real war heroes? Must they be associated with the likes of him?

#### GEORGE MAGAZINE

If you think these myths don’t die hard. Consider for example, an article by Pulitzer Prize winning author, David Halberstam, published in the April 2000 edition of George Magazine. Featured in the article are six pictures. Of these, five provide distorted views of Vietnam. That is to say, 80% of the pictures featured lead the viewer to draw the wrong conclusion.

The opening picture shows a helicopter on the “US Embassy” roof, with panic stricken refugees struggling on the stair case trying to be one of the last refugees to escape Vietnam before the Communist take over. The staircase itself has been immortalized, with a copy sitting in a US Vietnam War museum. But it didn’t happen at the US Embassy. It is thought to be a photo taken of a roof top some four blocks away. A big fraud, no, but it wasn’t the US Embassy.

The next famous image on the opposite page shows the Pulitzer Prize winning photo by Eddie Adams of the Saigon Police Chief, BGen Loan, executing a Viet Cong prisoner in front of the camera.<sup>72</sup> What the photo can’t tell you, is that this Viet Cong

Lieutenant had just murdered, execution style, a South Vietnamese police major and all his family moments before. He was caught red-handed. Under martial law at the time, General Loan was well within his rights to execute him on the spot, just like General Eisenhower's decision to execute German commandos (on Christmas Eve), caught behind the lines during the Battle of the Bulge. War often calls for drastic measures. But you didn't get the whole story from that photo.

On the next page is a picture of a black man holding a sign at an anti-war rally. The sign reads, "No Vietnamese ever called me a N\*\*\*er".<sup>73</sup> The image portrayed leaves you with the idea that blacks and minorities would have gotten less prejudicial treatment by Vietnamese society—not true. It could also carry the myth that minorities were singled out, drafted and sent to Vietnam to die for the white majority. Minorities died at a slightly lesser rate than their presence in society. Nowhere does it mention that nearly 300 black admirals and generals were created as a result of the Vietnam War.<sup>74</sup>

Another photo shows an accurate casualty scene with wounded white and black soldiers. The only picture of actual American combat forces is them wounded and apparently losing. Only 3% of troops in Vietnam ever saw active combat. Of those that did, they were more likely to have won than lost. Its not a totally false image, just not a very complete one.

The final distortion, is that of a naked Vietnamese girl fleeing a napalm attack. You're left with the impression that the napalm was dropped or ordered by the US military, part of a wanton destruction of civilians during the war. But this picture was taken in 1972. The little girl is Kim Phuc, who now lives in Toronto.<sup>75</sup> She was seen fleeing S. Vietnamese aircraft dropping napalm on orders of S. Vietnamese officers



fighting the Communist Army, assaulting Route One. Nowhere is it mentioned that it was an attack on Vietnamese, by Vietnamese, in the closing years of the war. By 1972, almost all American Forces were long gone from the actual country of Vietnam. This picture showed the result of a civil war between Vietnamese, but it has come to define American participation in that war. It's an image routinely used to allude to American technological callousness and wanton destruction of defenseless civilians. These were some of the same assertions leveled at NATO operations in Kosovo/Serbia.<sup>76</sup>

George Magazine, founded by the late JFK Jr., caters to the "x-generation" (maybe even "Y" generation) most of whom haven't the vaguest idea, about what happened in Vietnam. If they have been taught anything at all, it is that it was an example of America at its worst. Vietnam was certainly a cruel war. American involvement had its ugly side. But many noble and courageous things were accomplished. The few images that are portrayed reflect only one side of this history. Unfortunately, many of those, like the ones in this article, don't tell the story. They are fraudulent in content, but accurate in fact. If you just leafed through the magazine and didn't read the article, any notion of balance would have escaped you. If you were a young "Generation XYZer" would images like this persuade you to join the military. It almost seems like some in the media purposely distort the news?<sup>77</sup>

#### DESTROYING THE VILLAGE TO SAVE IT

In 1991, talking about plans for the invasion of Kuwait, General Schwarzkopf told how he rebuked one of the more aggressive plans because he "didn't want to destroy Kuwait in order to save it".<sup>78</sup> Over his career, Gen Schwarzkopf had undoubtedly heard

the quote, "they destroyed a village in order to save it". Every time someone wanted to try to show the absurdity of the military mindset and the entire war effort in Vietnam, this "stupid" quote could be trotted out. It came from none other than Peter Arnett.

Peter Arnett came to a village called Ben Tre, the scene of a battle, a few days after a major fight between S. Vietnamese forces and a large Viet Cong force during Tet. Army Major Phil Cannella and an Air Force major named Chester L. Brown, were interviewed. Major Cannella, described how the fierce little band of Americans held out, in an overrun South Vietnamese position for 50 hours. Unable to get any air or artillery support during Tet, he described how the Viet Cong had laid siege to the entire town, with captured S. Vietnamese howitzers, including their small compound.

Arnett had come in after tanks and troops of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had finally relieved them and secured the airfield. Cannella remembers telling Arnett, that in defending the town it was a shame that some of it was destroyed, but that most of the damage was done by the Viet Cong using the captured artillery. The quote was changed by Arnett and attributed, not to Maj Cannella, but to Air Force Major Brown, who hadn't even been there during the siege.<sup>79</sup> More than just a headline for stupidity, the false quote came to imply "that the Americans had battered Ben Tre, indiscriminately killing civilians..."<sup>80</sup> These stories never die once in print. Like most of the "myths", this one was "re-reported" as late as 1995, when a story in People Magazine quoted a "professional" Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist Bobby Mueller saying, "Destroying a village to save it from Communism doesn't make much sense".<sup>81</sup> This is one of many distortions based on hearsay continuing today.<sup>82</sup> This specific one, managed to occupy a

combatant CINC's war time thoughts 20 years later. The media will be a weapon in our adversary's arsenal. It should be fully understood.

But myths like this also do irreparable damage outside the military. The press is more than willing to help. A former Saigon press corps member, Peter Braestrup of the *Washington Post*, said the press had badly misled the American public. He confessed in a TV documentary, "Rarely had contemporary crisis journalism turned out, in retrospect, to have veered so widely from reality."<sup>83</sup> But the damage had been done.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEW REALITIES

Americans want everything fast, faster and fastest. The news is a good example. If radio was good, TV was better. You didn't have to waste time creating a picture in your mind. If the 6-o'clock news was good, 24-hour news was better. You can get it whenever you want. If TV was good, the web is better with "Live" video streaming in. Americans want to be informed and have jumped on the technology train—"all aboard". Everyone's either on the Web or directly affected by it. The news media, like the "dot.com" entrepreneurs, are eager to please. Survival depends on it. Nothing has changed the media like the 24-hour news cycle. Nothing will change the strategy of conflict like the effects of "Live" coverage of war on a population. The pressure to act will magnify. The power of the information flow will open vulnerabilities, which must be understood and planned for.

#### The 24-hour News Cycle

The constant quest for news devours information like a cheetah eating a gazelle. Dana Priest, a veteran reporter for the *Washington Post* said the Internet hasn't changed the media environment nearly as much as the news "vacuum", created by the round-the-clock news requirements of the CNN and MSNBC's of the world. It has caught many people by surprise. "We haven't really begun to fully understand the whole information age and to confront the realities", said former White House Chief of Staff, Leon Panetta. A vacuum to fill and furious competition can have tremendous repercussions. Time for

reflection and editorial judgement have “passed in the rush to ‘go live on the air’”.<sup>84</sup>

Competition is fierce. Tammy Kupperman, an NBC Pentagon reporter said, “if one of the other networks puts a story on the air at 7:30, we better have that story in more depth by 8:30.”<sup>85</sup> Competition has always been present (during the Civil War, reporters often bribed telegraph operators to give preference to their copy over a competitors) but, the sheer volume requirement of 24 hour coverage has dramatically altered the quantity and quality of news.<sup>86</sup> The time line is exponentially smaller than ever before.

“It’s not the 24hr news cycle but 24hr news system”.<sup>87</sup> Newspaper web pages have become the major sources for news in all 3 broadcast media. Go to the BBC web site and you can get video, print or radio of any news event in the world. The *NY Times* has a larger on-line subscription than they do a print delivery one. The *Washington Post* and *LA Times*, to name a few, are heavily invested in this new phenomena and have proven to be big competitors with the CNN and MSNBC”.<sup>88</sup> CNN’s television viewership has declined by 35% in the past 5 years while its website patronage has exploded. The site gets 6.7 billion hits a month – four million of those are regular visitors – 700 people work for the site.<sup>89</sup> With so much product being delivered, how vulnerable is this intelligence source to tampering?<sup>90</sup> The media’s main purpose is advertising revenue, but their customers use it as intelligence. “The integrity of information over the Internet (and all others) are seriously in question, as a result of this speeded up news cycle.”<sup>91</sup> The increasingly competitive effort to fill the news vacuum could corrupt information and lead to even more myths being created.

World leaders, senior military officers and the average American often use the very same intelligence source – TV. Mr. Panetta said, “I learned about the Oklahoma

city bombing from CNN and got a call that a TWA airplane went down off Long Island, from the Secretary of Transportation, just seconds before I saw it on the TV".<sup>92</sup> Noel Koch, noted terrorism expert and former Dep Asst Sec of Def, for counter-terrorism during the Reagan Administration, said in 1980, "our best intelligence is invariably from the media."<sup>93</sup> It is much more so the case today. President Clinton was in a San Francisco hotel room, when he saw the horrific pictures of dead American soldiers being dragged through the streets in Somalia.<sup>94</sup> "The TV images horrified and angered him".<sup>95</sup> Will a president have time to get the real facts out to the public, before the media writes the history for public opinion? Former Chairman of the JCS, General Shalikashvili said of our pullout from Somalia, "We (the military) would not have left Mogadishu if we (the US) had reacted differently to the killing of those American Rangers... Things would have run totally different."<sup>96</sup> The force of public opinion driven by media frenzy, shortens time for good decisions. Time compression of news is something military commanders must understand. President Johnson warned the press during Vietnam, "If you are too busy or not inclined to help, please count ten before you hurt."<sup>97</sup> This is especially good advice today.

Inaccurate reporting has serious consequences. Reporting often becomes history. Myths are created and reputations ruined. To blame the media for a conspiracy of continuously deceitful and inaccurate stories, with a baseline plot of tearing down democracy would not only be wrong, it would give the media credit for much more organization and centralized leadership than is even remotely possible. It's much the same response that senior military commanders give members of the press when accused of some diabolical intent, "you give us too much credit". The famous reporters "byline"

was instituted as form of after the fact censorship and was imposed by Union General Joe Hooker to blame the “legion of inaccuracies” that flourished in the rabid reporting of the war. General Sherman so hated reporters that he banished them from camps (Generals, Schwarzkopf and Powell were accused of this tactic, on occasion, during Desert Storm)<sup>98</sup> The reality of unprofessional journalism, aimed at sensation and ratings, is as pervasive and evil as any coordinated plot. Longtime CNN correspondent, Frank Sesno said, “the biggest danger of the internet is inaccuracy – as the speed of Web communications grows even faster with the introduction of Web TV, rumors can spread from one news outlet to another like electronic dominoes.”<sup>99</sup> Live coverage will make it all the more easy.

#### Covering War Live

Live coverage of war is here. The technology makes it so.<sup>100</sup> In 1991, During Desert Storm, with the exception of CNN’s Shaw and Arnett’s sanctioned broadcasts from the Iraqi capital, only two networks (Forrest Sawyer of ABC and Bob McKeowan of CBS) were able to equip vans manned with a ‘platoon’ of technicians (six), generator and 6-foot satellite dishes to cover live action during the ground war (nearly one ton of equipment). “Now, five years later a network would need only a two-person crew, equipped with digital camera...wide-band cell phone...laptop computer...no more than 100 pounds of equipment.”<sup>101</sup> Get ready for more dramatic footage. In Kosovo, the press were sending images through a laptop on a satellite phone.<sup>102</sup> The Gulf War media technology has evolved from a “57 Chevy” to a “Lexus” in the past 10 years. If printed words can inflame the public, then live coverage will drive it to unheard of ferocity. “They are beating the passengers, they are threatening to kill them now! They are

threatening to kill them now! We want fuel now!!! – This led the evening news the night of the TWA 847 hijacking.<sup>103</sup> The pressure to “do something” will be even more “Bosnian” in its effect. This will cause a tremendous change in the way war/military operations are covered and will ultimately lead to “live” coverage of conflict, like it or not.<sup>104</sup> If the public is captured by a live auto-accident, can you imagine the ratings sensation of “live” war coverage? High ratings equals greater advertising revenue. The media will wantonly rush to the carnage.

This could cause disruptions of battles in progress and the loss of operational security.<sup>105</sup> Former Chairman of the JCS, General Colin Powell said he would arrest reporters if they got in the way trying to provide “live” coverage. “I’d have locked you all up...and guess who would have won the battle? I mean the American people would have stripped your skin off”, he told reporters.”<sup>106</sup> The media may interfere and may even compromise security. Senior commanders need to have thought about what strategies are available to prevent or mitigate. They must not be afraid to act.

Secrets are easily given away during live coverage. Schwarzkopf tells of a “live” report nearly giving away the “left-hook” surprise. Barry Dunsmore, tells a story how he almost, inadvertently, told the Egyptians that Israel was planning to cross the Suez canal during the 1973 Middle East War.<sup>107</sup> The British were clearly frustrated during the Falklands, by lack of press restraint. “There was constant speculation about future British intentions, guided by battalions of retired admirals and generals...any...interesting information... the failure of the Argentine bombs to explode, was published”.<sup>108</sup> Sounds like Desert Storm coverage 10 years ahead of its time.



The military needs to understand the technology and its use by the media. It does no good to try and conduct operational security by censoring the satellite uplink access, (like in Desert Storm) if the reporters have their own, in a briefcase. Educating the media will take time and effort by both senior and junior officers alike. It will require greater use of cross-flow between the two institutions. More dialog and more study. Expose junior leaders to the media early. Require the media to be trained to military constraints and the military to understanding the needs and technical capability of the media. The old cliché, “you don’t know what you don’t know” is apropos here. Neither side benefits from jeopardizing lives in the process.<sup>109</sup> Reporting the truth should be the ultimate goal. But there are other forces at work. The great need for news will allow manipulation of information at an unprecedented rates by adversarial forces.

#### THE MEDIA MANIPULATED

The press gets used all the time. John Miklaszewski said, “nearly everyone that comes to me with information has an agenda they want me to further.”<sup>110</sup> If it’s news, I’m more than willing to assist in most cases. We report the news”. Whether it’s to promote a new program, advocate a strategy or for some vindictive, personal reason, people use the press and the press will generally comply.

Former Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu said, “unreported terrorist acts would be like the proverbial tree falling in a silent forest.”<sup>111</sup> Maybe, but that isn’t going to happen in a supply and demand news economy. “Captured directives from N. Vietnam in the Indochina Archive of the University of California show that two of the most powerful factions of the American antiwar movement, the People’s Committee for

Peace and Justice and the National Peace Action Committee, were working hand-in-hand with the N. Vietnamese.”<sup>112</sup> Remember the Unabomber? A 35,000 word diatribe printed in the *NY Times* or the *Washington Post* (with the FBI’s concurrence).<sup>113</sup> During a 1975 seizure of OPEC headquarters in Vienna and the kidnapping of oil ministers, famed terrorist Carlos the Jackal, waited for the TV cameras to arrive before he staged his dramatic exit with the hostages.<sup>114</sup> “Klieg lights on, protest on”. These are the info-terrorists commands. The Canadian Broadcast Corp set up cameras and Iranian students in front of the US Embassy immediately began protesting, saying “Death to Carter”, after a few minutes they changed their slogans to say “Mort a’ Carter” for the French speaking Canadian public.<sup>115</sup> During the TWA hostage crisis “the Hijackers and Amal Militia friends understood the value of American news sources” they made Hostages available for interviews.<sup>116</sup>

The Clinton administration reacted to the mortar attack on a Sarajevo market in February 1994 (that killed 68) people by ultimately sending in US troops. This massacre of civilians is now believed to have been perpetrated by the Bosnian Muslims, in an effort to manipulate American public opinion through the press.<sup>117</sup> “The Serbs understood the power of the media and used it strategically.” According to Stojan Cerovic, a Serbian journalist working for the US Institute for Peace in Washington, Serbs used Western media to their advantage.<sup>118</sup> “Milosevic really wanted us to get into the ravines and into gorges. He really wanted us to relive the Serbian situation in the 1940’s”—Air Vice Marshall Tony Mason, RAF<sup>119</sup> NATO almost complied.

Osama Bin Laden, the international terrorist has used global television adeptly to connect with a far flung audience and amplify his “charisma” and prowess. He has used

cyberspace to conduct operational simultaneity in his attacks..." on the American Embassy bombings in East Africa.<sup>120</sup>

If editorial judgement or self restraint is lacking, the military needs to be prepared to step into a more paternal role. Savvy, schooled and sensitive to competing interests, a seasoned commander needs sage advice and priceless media experience to make the right calls. The stage is ripe for manipulation, but there are ways to fight back. Where is editorial judgement? It gets left in the rush to fill the news vacuum. "Live" coverage, myth creation and media manipulation are the "best supporting actors to an enemy's asymmetrical media weapon. In a zero defect culture, making mistakes, especially in the media can kill a career. More importantly it can lose the war. Leaders need experience prior to being in the hot seat. If you wait too long, it may be too late.

### ASYMMETRIC ATTACKS

Myths feed other myths. They are fertile ground for an advisory to attack. One strategy used is to take advantage of myth to circulate a second myth based on the first. A type of circular logic then prevails. If you can make a jump from casualty aversion to indiscriminate bombing then all things are possible.<sup>121</sup> In the "15, 000 foot myth" the tentacles are multiplying rapidly. Morality can be questioned. Professionalism can be fed into the fire. They're "flying high" only to stay out of harm's way.<sup>122</sup> If airpower really doesn't prevent casualties and loss of civilian life, then by reverse logic maybe introduction of ground forces would have.<sup>123</sup> This opens up a debate on the ethics of using airpower at all. Many who supported humanitarian intervention in Kosovo, now argue that this just cause, was subverted by an "indiscriminate" bombing campaign that

resulted in non-combatant casualties and collateral damage. Has this been the result of myth expansion? Was the air campaign indiscriminate? Absolutely not. It may have been the most accurate offensive in history.<sup>124</sup> Yes, there was collateral damage, but has there ever been a war without any? Finally, the allegation of morality may be the most insidious form of asymmetrical warfare being used against America. As Sub-Comandante Marcos himself said, “what governments should really fear is a communications expert”.<sup>125</sup> If you can knock off an enemy’s greatest weapon, then all things are possible. This is being done with “Netwar” tactics by skilled manipulators of public opinion.<sup>126</sup> A common denominator is they all tend to go to the press for help.

If you can get just one inaccurate picture or impression planted in today’s media the effects will multiply like wild fire. As Mark Pedly, an anthropologist, writes about war correspondents, “To the extent that US reporters can inject any argument of their own into the news, it is through their choice of sources, selection of quotes, and textual juxtaposition thereof. Their biases remain hidden within opinions of sources.”<sup>127</sup> Take that with a phenomena he describes as the “A” team—“B” team mentality, where the big name journalists “parachute” in to link up with hired mercenary “stringers” who know the area and find the story. They jump in, review the story, throw in some dramatic visuals and bounce out, leaving the “B” teamer’s to essentially copy their work for the lesser new agencies. The stage is set for bias and manipulation.

## CHAPTER V

### War of the Tiger and the Elephant

*"It will be a war between an elephant and a tiger, If the tiger stands still the elephant will crush him. But the tiger does not stand still. He will leap upon the elephant and slowly the elephant will bleed to death."*<sup>128</sup> .....Ho Chi Minh

To beat back the pervasiveness of myths, an offensive strategy is called for. Not playing is losing. The high road can often lead the wrong way. The media has weaknesses and they will be exploited by an enemy. You should know and understand what they are, in order to counter them effectively. A quick response is called for if myths are to be killed, before they metastasize. A highly trained professional, skilled in this new art of war and expertly trained with the media weapon, is called for.

#### COUNTER ATTACK—The Info Warrior

The newsmaker can always decide to try and dominate the press. He can hold meetings, news conferences, summits. They can fill the news vacuum. Teddy Roosevelt joked that he discovered Mondays – discovering editors had little news on Sunday nights and if he held back until then, he could get better Monday front page coverage.<sup>129</sup> Johnson knew the press. He knew they were specialists – knew the press understood their respective subjects more than he did. He never announced news conferences in advance. He held press conferences with only the White House reporters, on weekends and in his office, all without cameras.<sup>130</sup> Decision makers, aren't defenseless. In the American Civil War, Probably the funniest story (from a military perspective) was Union

General Meade's putting *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter, Edward Crapsey, on his horse backwards, with a sign around his neck saying, "libeler of the Press" in escorting him from camp.<sup>131</sup> President Roosevelt once awarded the Nazi cross to John O'Donnell of the *NY News* and ordered Robert Post of the *NY Times* to put on a dunce cap and stand in the corner.<sup>132</sup> These methods of intimidation and ridicule may have worked in the past, but understanding news cycles and modern mediums may be a more valuable weapon.

Admiral Kendell Pease, Chief of Information for the US NAVY has called global media a "force multiplier". During Desert Shield the Navy put CNN reporters on board carriers, to film US fighter-bombers taking off on practice runs against Iraqi targets to "send a message".<sup>133</sup> As the press developed some saw danger. Fearing the press would be too patriotic and serve the role of cheerleader: James Reston, wrote in 1967:

"A relentless barrage of facts and criticism, as noisy but also as accurate as artillery fire. This means a less provincial, even a less nationalistic press, because our job in this age as I see it, is not to serve as cheerleaders for our side in the present world struggle but to help the largest possible number of people to see the realities of the changing and convulsive world in which American policy must operate"<sup>134</sup>

The intervening years have proven the press listened closely to Reston, taking his advice.

Theater CINCs today, surely know about the inaccurate "artillery fire of the press". Currently Theater CINC's have limited weapons available to counterattack inaccurate myths. But they do have some weapons. There is a freedom of the press not a freedom of access. If a reporter acts irresponsibly or if their editors or publications do, why aren't they persona non grata to the military for a period of time. At the same time, responsible competitors could be given access to "hot" topics. The media is fiercely competitive. Nothing would please MSNBC to be rewarded for responsible reporting while CNN (after Tailwind) was denied key access. Why should irresponsible journalism be rewarded. The AP after No Gun Ri, Newsweek after Kosovo are just a couple

examples where penalties might be appropriate. Certainly not a club to use every day but it would be a valuable weapon in the kit.

Today CINC's have virtually no budget for public relations tactics like placing advertisements in international media. If a rape incident occurred, similar to what occurred in Okinawa some years ago, understanding Japanese media climates and countering news with on camera interviews by US officials, along with well placed advertising "info-mercials" may be a better strategy. Understanding regional media outlets and being able to influence them is absolutely essential. There must be media agents out "gathering" the news. In this case, knowing the main media sources of various demographic groups and how to influence the feed is most important. Even getting a news segment broadcast into another country's media via Web products, "live" interviews or just pictures at the scene could be important. Wait on the media and it may not be the right message, too late or not at all. Images, more than words tend to carry the day. All options must be understood, thought through and stored on the shelf.

#### RELIEF PITCHER REQUIRED

The coach looks to the bull pen and calls in the ace reliever. The team needs a win and the reliever can pull it out of the fire. This is a situation many senior military leaders can find themselves in when they can't get their message out. The news cycle is passing them in a rush to a dramatic story. Their side is being blurred or not reported at all. The myths are on the verge of creation. The CINC needs a media relief pitcher. Enter Bradley Graham of the *Washington Post*. The commander of the Haiti operation, (then) Lt. Gen. Hugh Shelton, allowed Bradley Graham to shadow him throughout the

Haiti operation's planning and direction. Guidelines for security were laid down and abided by. Graham got access to everything within reason. A deal with the devil, maybe. But the result was honest and accurate coverage.<sup>135</sup> It provided a behind-the-scenes look the American people needed and ultimately good coverage for the military. Not only was that beneficial then, but General Shelton later became CINCSOC and the JCS Chairman. If a story really needed to get out, the relationship of trust and confidence they had built together could be called to play. Some wins can be easier than others.

Reporters will agree to many things for exclusive access. They need those types of stories in a competitive world. But all reporters are not equal most are trustworthy, some are not. A senior leader, through trial and error, needs to pick the right ones and develop relationships. The first time to meet each other should not be during a crisis. Military officers always think they have more important things to do than talk to the press. Talking to the press, providing access or creating a relationship should be thought of as preventative maintenance by senior leaders, especially if they want their side to get out. Developing this savvy in younger officers, could pay even bigger dividends.

### RESPOND NOW

If you wait, like the "elephant", you will be bled to death. As soon as it looks like it's a big, serious story – coverage in the news media goes right to the spot with anchors on scene. Cutting them off may be the best strategy, if the story is false. If it is not, you have to play ball.<sup>136</sup> If you "wait and see" the stampede of the media juggernaut, will trample common sense and judgement in the press. Once that happens, myth creation is the next stop. Myths need to be interdicted. Leaders have to be seen out in front. They



must compete for the news coverage. Commanders in the field and the most senior ranking officers are likely to draw coverage.<sup>137</sup> Press conferences or military to military (with media presence) are on the side of newsmakers.<sup>138</sup> When the media senses a disaster in an American response, it is all over the news. This was certainly the case with the cruise missile attacks on mud huts in Sudan, helicopters in the Iranian desert or the bombing of a civilian train in Kosovo. The blood will flow if not stopped.

Trying to prevent coverage by secrecy or deception are risky propositions. They may still be the best way for some operations. But, with the news vacuum that exists there is too much competition to hide very much. Inviting the press and choosing your own ground to “fight” on, may be a better strategy.<sup>139</sup> Wait and see doesn’t fill today’s news vacuum. It is very clear that the majority of seasoned journalism professionals will hold their side of a bargain. On an individual basis all things are possible. When “dancing with the devil” you had better understand the ground rules and possible outcomes. The press will stick to a bargain, but not be afraid to put dirty laundry at the top of the hour. No relationship, favorable or not will get in the way of most professional journalists. It is a difficult negotiation not to be entered in to lightly.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Today there is much written about Netwar or information warfare. Definitions of what it is and what it isn’t are still being sought. But one thing is for certain, whatever the battlefield, you will need to have people who know how to get there and how to fight once they arrive. As the services are struggling to create these new information warriors, prudent thought should be given to the media weapon. Specialists need to be trained and

educated in the media arts. A recent attempt by Army PSYOPS folks, to have interns get experience at CNN and NPR, made headlines. It generated media outrage and accusations like, “maybe CNN was the target of a PSYOP penetration and is still to naïve to figure it out what was going on”.<sup>140</sup> The defense—“you give us too much credit”. It should validate the media still doesn’t understand the military very well. This program was cancelled because the media didn’t want a false impression. But the media seems to have little concern about creating false impressions elsewhere. It was the right idea. It should be continued elsewhere if not at CNN and NPR. There should be public affairs officer (PAO) sabbaticals to the press, in return. It’s absurd to think 4 Army sergeants had penetrated and “psyoped” CNN. It is not a level playing field. The military shouldn’t retreat, industry competition says there will be others who will play ball—perception or not.

The PAOs of yesterday should be information warriors today. “Info-warriors” should have a wide ranging career progression that includes operations, intelligence and media exposure. Senior level PAOs should have held jobs in all three areas. These new info specialists, should be sent to media training/apprenticeships with international media in the theaters where they will work. The press doesn’t believe PAO’s are unbiased anyway. Credibility is an individual commodity. The pay-off would be exponential.

An information warrior, properly trained, could examine both the content and creative signatures of media broadcasts. They would, over time, be able to identify the artistic signatures used in manipulation attempts and exploit that knowledge. They would be likely to create sound offensive methods of fighting the image war as well as by identifying new “players” in the conflict. Like current PAO’s, they would know the

mediums, who can be trusted and who can not, but they be better trained at staying abreast of trends and monitor false perceptions invading the mediums. Can you imagine a Theatre CINC turning such a specialist away? Time is wasting. Information is at a fusion state. Who ever can harness the process is likely to reap the benefits.

### CREDIBILITY AT ALL COSTS

“Why should freedom of the press and freedom of speech be allowed ...and were it up to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to choose the latter.” Said Thomas Jefferson in 1787. The father of a free press. But after his presidency in 1809 he said in a letter to John Norvell, “ The man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them”. <sup>141</sup> Freedom of the press, like sausage is delicious in the end state but ugly in the making.

We would never want a censored press, but can we always afford a completely unrestricted one? In conflict it seems the answer is no. But too much restraint could lead to manipulation or abuse. The independence and credibility of the press is vital. A free society can't afford the media be seen as a propaganda tool, it is far too important. But hands-off is no strategy either. Competition is fierce and even the most important secrets may escape. A plan must be developed for these realities.

Censorship doesn't always work well unless enforced with an iron hand (often unlikely or impossible in a democracy) the British proved that in the Falklands. Operational security will still be the coin of the realm. Barry Dunsmore, long time Pentagon correspondent said, “the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment guarantees freedom of the press, but

there is nothing in the Constitution which compels the military to allow journalists to run free on a battlefield..."<sup>142</sup> Plans may include manipulation and deception or they may not. Crossing the Rubicon of media deception maybe necessary, if the lives of thousands of troops or the success of strategic plans stand in the balance. It shouldn't be ruled out.

Had the military not engaged in questionable deceptive practices of its own, a better case could be made for outrage. Yet, hands were not clean, bolstering the media's case. A deception to mitigate wrong-doing is unacceptable. A deception to save lives will most likely be accepted. Had the military's credibility been high, would the dynamics of coverage have resulted in inaccurate myths being transmitted? Who can say? But the current media climate is quick to jump on any instance of credibility flaw. Throw this together with the allegations of speeded up videotapes (after a bombing of a train in Kosovo) and its game over.

Despite missteps military officer's credibility remains high. Though ongoing or suspected operations always get the most attention, the most damaging thing to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century military may be the furthering of false impressions. The press deals in the now—report today, apologize tomorrow. Once an inaccuracy is out, the time to respond in the court of public opinion is "hours" not days. Aggressive counter-attacks, by highly trained professionals, must be made immediately in the scope of a strategic plan. Resources should be allocated and forces trained. Unchallenged myths are too corrosive to society to leave alone.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

John Adams said (1815) about the press, regarding the future of government and mankind, "regulation of the press is the most difficult, dangerous and important problem they have to resolve. Mankind cannot now be governed without it, nor at present with it."<sup>143</sup>

Today, it is not a question of governing but co-existing. The media is constantly changing. The thirst for 24-hour news has created a vacuum for news products. "Live" coverage of war is here and must be planned for. "Netwar" is a reality. It is a battleground every bit as important as one were bombs are dropping. The media is a weapon. It must be trained with, understood and used for the right purposes. It requires a proficient marksman and a valid target. Our enemies are media savvy and understand this the power of this weapon. Keeping secrets will be more difficult and more often than not impossible. The battle for public opinion will test leadership. A conflict can be lost before the first troops arrive. Leaders must have media relief pitchers to turn to.

To fight in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires a savvy information flow, in and out. A corps of information warriors is needed. a hybrid between operational and intelligence specialties. It is an insurance policy for operations. Understanding the media arts will be crucial. Not playing is losing in today's "infosphere". News can be manipulated by either a hungry press corps or an adversary. Inaccurate stories will predominate. The media will continue to rush to a story like a mongrel horde to a slaughter. Judgment and restraint by an overly competitive press will prove difficult. The threat of being scooped reigns supreme. Myths must be crushed at the very outset or they will consume integrity, honor and ultimately jeopardize freedom. There is much at stake.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. "Air Force study strengthens link between Agent Orange, diabetes", *Air Force News*
2. Andrade, Joe, Colonel, USA, Interview and lecture March 23, 2000, Monterey, Ca,
3. Aukofer, Frank and Lawrence William P., America's Team: The Odd Couple. Nashville: The Freedom Forum 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Center 1995
4. Bell, J.B., *Columbia Journalism Review*, May June 78
5. Bowden, Mark, *Blackhawk Down*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999
6. Burkett, B.G. and Whitley, Glenna, *Stolen Valor*, Dallas: Verity Press, Inc, 1998
7. Callard, Jim, "Kosovo Analyses: Asking the Right Questions", Feb 99 AF News Service
8. David Ronfeldt, John Arquilla, Graham Fuller, Mellisa Fuller, *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico* RAND, 1998
9. de Caro, Chuck, "Who are we? Where are We Going?", Organizing for the future of IW Paper Given at an IW Conference, Crystal City, Va, 1997
10. Dunsmore, Barrie, "The Next War Live?", Shorenstine Center for Press and Politics, Harvard University School of Government, March 1996
11. Ehrhard, Tom, Lt Col, USAF email discussion, Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 2000, 9:58am "The 15,000 Foot Myth."
12. Evans, Michael "Dark Victory," Proceedings, Naval Institute Press, Sept 99 Field, Florida, 5 Dec 1999, Lecture (non-attribution only)
13. Gordon, Michael and Trainor, Bernard, *The General's War*, Boston & NY: Little Brown & Co., 1995
14. Grant, Rebecca, "The Kosovo Campaign: Airpower made it work", Air Force Association, Arlington Va, 1999
15. Gray, Chris Hables, *Postmodern War*, New York: Guilford Press, 1997
16. Haberstam, David, "The Vietnam War is Finally Over," George Magazine, April 2000, NY, NY

17. Hastings, Max and Jenkins, Simon, *The Battle for the Falklands*, W.W. Norton & Co NY, 1983
18. Heckscher, Melissa, "The Whole World's Converging", *Monterey County Herald*, 22 Jan 2000
19. Hoffman, Bruce, *Inside Terrorism*, New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1998
20. Hughes-Wilson, *Military Intelligence Blunders*, New York: Carroll & Graf 1999
21. Kupperman, Tammy, NBC Pentagon reporter, Interview at Pentagon Jan 9, 2000
22. Livingston, Steve, Associate Professor of Political Communication and International Affairs, George Washington Univ., phone interview 22 Mar 200
23. Mailer, Norman, "Altitude Sickness", *Washington Post*, 24 May 1999
24. Mailer, Norman, "Milosevic and Clinton," *Washington Post* 25 May 1999
25. McRoberts, Wade, Col, USAF, email discussion, Feb 7, 2000, 8:48am
26. Miklaszewski, John, Interview at the Pentagon, 9 Jan 2000 NBC
27. Nacos, Brigitte L., *Terrorism and the Media*, New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1994
28. Neuman, Johanna, *Lights Camera War*, St. Martin's Press, NY, 1996
29. Panetta, Leon, Interview at Panetta Institute, Feb 17 2000
30. Pedelty, Mark, *War stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents*, New York and London: Routledge, 1995
31. Pfaff, William, "NATO Committed No War Crimes In Bombing Yugoslavia", *International Herald Tribune* on January 24, 2000, Campaign: Aerospace Power
32. Psychological Operations Course, Air Force Special Operations School, Hurlburt Field
33. Reston, James, *The Artillery of the Press*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York: Harper & Row, 1967
34. Robins, Max, "Military Interns booted from CNN, NPR", *TV Guide*, April 15-21, 2000

35. Schwartzkopf, Norman and Petre, Peter, "It doesn't take a hero", NY: Linda Grey, Bantam Books, 1992
36. Smith, Perry, Major Gen (ret) *How CNN Fought the War*, New York: Carroll Publishing Group, 1991
37. US ARMY Official History of the Mexican War, Audio Tape History, 1964  
Washington: AFPN ,29 March 2000



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Stolen Valor*, Dallas: Verity Press, Inc, 1998 pg 47 stolen valor

<sup>2</sup> pg. 48

<sup>3</sup> pg. 56

<sup>4</sup> Before the Gulf War congressional debate raged over the possibilities that minorities (like in Vietnam) were being sent to the desert to die.

<sup>5</sup> *Stolen Valor*, Pg 57

<sup>6</sup> Pg 59

<sup>7</sup> The death rate in Vietnam was lower than in previous wars. The mortality rate in Vietnam vs. 22 per 1000. In Korea it was 43 per 1000 and in WW II it was 52 per 1000. *Stolen Valor*, pg 64

<sup>8</sup> Pg 72

<sup>9</sup> Pg 73

<sup>10</sup> Pg 73

<sup>11</sup> Pg 51

<sup>12</sup> Pg 53(Only the Army could be drafted because AF, Marines (with a few exceptions) and the Navy were all volunteers. *Stolen Valor* Pg 52.)

<sup>13</sup> Pg 53.

<sup>14</sup> With the exception of the last couple years of the war 1971-72 when it started to rise, but by then 90% had already come and gone) *Stolen Valor*, pg 61

<sup>15</sup> pg 62

<sup>16</sup> Pg 64.

<sup>17</sup> pg 64

<sup>18</sup> Phone Interview with B.K. Burkett -- The Justice Dept has just commissioned a \$2.5 study—no military records were checked) The authors guess is of the 3.3 million veterans who served, less than .001% is probably in jail. Regarding unemployment. A common depiction is the Vietnam vet as an unemployed drifter. Yet statistics in 1994 showed the unemployment rate for all males over 18 at around 6%. The rate for all veterans was 4.9%. Vietnam veterans who served outside the theater was 5% while vets who actually served inside the theater of operations was 3.9%.pg 67

<sup>19</sup> *Stolen Valor*, pg 76

<sup>20</sup> Pg 75

<sup>21</sup> Pg 87

<sup>22</sup> Pg 88.

<sup>23</sup> Pg 106

<sup>24</sup> Pg 90

<sup>25</sup> Pg 106

<sup>26</sup> A Washington State resident and manager of a restaurant, (in the vicinity of one of the interview sites where the CBS crew often dined) remembered the "New Yorkers" as having decided what kind of story they were going to do before they got there. Describing how they had solicited veterans, interviewing 87 and choosing the "four or five saddest cases to put on film" Mrs. Pilley continued, "The factual part of it didn't seem to matter as long as they captured the high drama and emotion that these few individuals offered." *Stolen Valor*, Pg 105

<sup>27</sup> Pg 106

<sup>28</sup> *Stolen Valor*, pg 550

<sup>29</sup> *Air Force News*, Washington: AFPN ,29 March 2000

<sup>30</sup> *Stolen Valor*, pg 533

<sup>31</sup> pg 546

<sup>32</sup> The Phoenix myth – Phoenix was not a secret US government assassination program. It was a public program announced at a press conference by a South Vietnamese government official (similar to the Justice Dept task force on drugs). It was a South Vietnamese run program aimed to identify and apprehend communist political leaders not kill them.. Though there were abuses. The "secret" nature of US direction of the Phoenix program is remains another popular myth. *Stolen Valor* Pg 423

<sup>33</sup> Andrade, Joe, Colonel, USA, Interview and lecture March 23, 2000, Monterey, Ca, Driven by the hype of another Vietnam or endless involvement, the Pentagon had to come up with a number, ceiling for US forces in country. Congress asked how many were there now. There was one in each province which added up to 55. That was what had been planned for the first phase. Follow on phases, were to have many more. The unintended consequences of the emotional issue was the restriction to 55 advisors in the field (there were many more than that working administration

issues in the Salvadoran Capital) forced the military into an overall better strategy of how to assist the Salvadorans. A true benefit of unintended consequences.

<sup>34</sup> Pedelty, Mark, *War stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents*, New York: Routledge, 1995 pg 121

<sup>35</sup> Andrade lecture/interview

<sup>36</sup> Andrade lecture/interview

<sup>37</sup> "War stories" pg 9

<sup>38</sup> Andrade lecture interview

<sup>39</sup> Andrade.

<sup>40</sup> Andrade

<sup>41</sup> pg 46

<sup>42</sup> Ronfeldt, Arquilla, Fuller, Fuller, *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico* RAND, 1998 pg 45

<sup>43</sup> pg 45

<sup>44</sup> pg 45

<sup>45</sup> Pg 50

<sup>46</sup> Pg 51.

<sup>47</sup> Combat operations were thus dying out and when the public, the media and human-rights NGO's both domestic and transnational, got involved, the EZLN was ready to shift gears to very different sort of conflict in which the principal maneuvers would take place off the field. *The Zapatista "Social Netwar"* pg 48

<sup>48</sup> Pg 102

<sup>49</sup> pg 48

<sup>50</sup> Pg 53

<sup>51</sup> At this same time another Marxist group, motivated by the opportunities of the EZLN crisis jumped into the media spotlight. Calling itself the Popular Revolution Army or EPR, they sent invitations and bus tickets for journalists to arrive at a particular time and place, where unbeknownst to each other (expecting to conduct interviews with rebel leaders) they were "live" witnesses to an EPR attack on a government building. The EPR, not even known for any major type of information operations, still gained media coverage with theatrical pronouncements and interviews and had WWW pages in Italy and the Netherlands. *The Zapatista "Social Netwar"* pg 53

<sup>52</sup> pg 76

<sup>53</sup> Extremely important in this conflict, is that despite initial missteps, the Mexican Army adapted to the conflict, developed extremely effective tactics (backing away from violent extermination) at occupying rather than eliminating the guerilla areas. However, they're efforts were usurped because the guerilla's won the war of public opinion and forced the army away from a military victory into negotiations. While civilian control of the military remained strong and was a great-unintended consequence of the Chiapas crisis. *The Zapatista "Social Netwar"* pg 75

<sup>54</sup> Galloway, Joseph L., "Doubts about a Korean massacre", US News, 12 April 2000

<sup>55</sup> Washington Post, "US studies link between strafing memo and No Gun Ri page A-8)

<sup>56</sup> Burkitt, phone interview May, 26th

<sup>57</sup> Pfaff, William, "NATO Committed No War Crimes In Bombing Yugoslavia", *International Herald Tribune*

<sup>58</sup> Newsweek, 15 May, John Barry and Evan Thomas, "The Kosovo Cover-up"

<sup>59</sup> Ehrhard, Tom, email discussion, Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 2000, 9:58am "The 15,000 Foot Myth."

"Gen Clark originated this myth by intoning that the Air Force was fecklessly restricting their pilots to 15,000 feet and that this was causing undue mis-identification of targets due to force protection. It's the old "you air guys don't take any risk" cultural problem. Well, the "15,000 foot myth" was grabbed by peacenicks who blame that on the civilian deaths (see recent Operation Human Watch reports)

<sup>60</sup> Mailer, Norman, "Altitude Sickness", *Washington Post*, 24 May 1999 in a 24 Sep 99 article called "Altitude Sickness," (the real cause for capitulation was the credible threat of a ground offensive).

<sup>61</sup> For example, see, "Milosevic and Clinton," *Washington Post* 25 May 1999. He writes, but there are occasional examples of heroism or sacrifice, and since both of the adversaries lose young men, there is, with all else, a hint of shared sorrow on both sides. Over the years and decades, that can even permit reconciliation.... Bombing however, is oppression. In large part, people who are bombed will never forgive the aggressor."

<sup>62</sup> The impression of the numbers killed on the highway of death was exponentially greater than those that died. It looked like thousands must have died, when in fact it was in the low hundreds-- most fled their vehicles into the desert. But the myth or impression, changed our whole policy pg Schwartzkopf, Norman and Petre, Peter, "It doesn't take a hero", NY: Linda Grey, Bantam Books, 1992 468

<sup>63</sup> McRoberts email, Feb 7, 2000, 8:48am

<sup>64</sup> Callard, Jim "Kosovo Analyses: Asking the Right Questions", Feb 99 AF News analysis article

<sup>65</sup> Aubin, Stephen, "How Newsweek missed the target in Kosovo", AF Mag May 19

<sup>66</sup> There was also some collateral damage—yet it is factually incorrect to say the bombing was, as a rule inaccurate or was substantially damaging to collateral surroundings—it has been called one of the most accurate in history for good reason. Targeting efficiency may have been reduced by forces on the ground whether special ops or conventional FAC's—not many would dispute this. But politically that was off the table.

- <sup>67</sup> pg 307 Other estimates say fewer than 9000 suicides of Vietnam veterans have occurred
- <sup>68</sup> *Stolen Valor*, Pg 306.
- <sup>69</sup> Pg 306
- <sup>70</sup> Criminals Are Free--In 1994 *60 Minutes*' Mike Wallace did a story on the getaway driver of the highly publicized Katherine Ann Power's anti-war protester turned criminal. Powers was given 5 years, but another suspect, and Vietnam "war hero" got life in prison. With *60 Minutes* pounding the drum, then Gov. Weld of Massachusetts (under pressure from Vietnam vets and the *Boston Globe*) recommended the "war hero's release. But instead of being a hero of Khe Sanh or Hill 861, as he claimed, he never served in combat at all. He wasn't a decorated Vietnam vet, but a supply clerk stationed in Kadena, Okinawa. He didn't serve even one tour in Vietnam.<sup>70</sup> This "war hero" is free today. What about all the real war hero's? Must they be associated with the likes of him.
- <sup>71</sup> *Stolen Valor* Pg 558.
- <sup>72</sup> Haberstam, David, "The Vietnam War is Finally Over," *George Magazine*, April 2000, pg 87)
- <sup>73</sup> pg 88
- <sup>74</sup> Burkett interview
- <sup>75</sup> George, pg 90
- <sup>76</sup> George pg 90.
- <sup>77</sup> Burkett said, "I saw this media distortion first hand. During an NVA attack of a nearby village several S. Vietnamese civilians suffered burns when the enemy torched their homes. The injured civilians were brought into our dispensary for medical treatment. Two reporters appeared at the main gate to do a story on how the Americans "accidentally napalmed" the village. The village had not been napalmed. There had been no air strike. But the reporter's had decided in advance what the story was. They wrote that the village had been napalmed." *Stolen Valor* Pg 30
- <sup>78</sup> Genrals' war pg 293
- <sup>79</sup> *Stolen Valor* Pg 120
- <sup>80</sup> pg 120
- <sup>81</sup> Pg 121
- <sup>82</sup> *Stolen Valor*, author, B.K. Burkett writes: "I saw this media distortion first hand. During an NVA attack of a nearby village several S. Vietnamese civilians suffered burns when the enemy torched their homes. The injured civilians were brought into our dispensary for medical treatment. Two reporters appeared at the main gate to do a story on how the Americans "accidentally napalmed" the village. The village had not been napalmed. There had been no air strike. But the reporters had decided in advance what the story was. They wrote that the village had been napalmed."
- <sup>83</sup> Hughes-Wilson, Military Intelligence blunders pg 209
- <sup>84</sup> Hoffman, Bruce, *Inside Terrorism*, New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1998 pg 138
- <sup>85</sup> Tammy Kupperman, NBC Pentagon reporter, Interview at Pentagon Jan 9, 2000
- <sup>86</sup> Neuman, Johanna, *Lights Camera War*, St. Martin's Press, NY, 1996, pg 33
- <sup>87</sup> Livingston, Steve, Associate Professor of Political Communication and International Affairs, George Washington Univ., phone interview 22 Mar 2000
- <sup>88</sup> Livingston interview
- <sup>89</sup> Heckscher, Melissa, "The Whole World's Converging", *Monterey County Herald*, 22 Jan 2000
- <sup>90</sup> Livingston Interview
- <sup>91</sup> *Inside Terrorism*, pg 134
- <sup>92</sup> Interview with Leon Panetta, 17 Feb 2000
- <sup>93</sup> *Inside Terrorism*, pg 151
- <sup>94</sup> Bowden, Mark, *Blackhawk Down*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999
- <sup>95</sup> *Blackhawk Down*, pg 304
- <sup>96</sup> Dunsmore, Barrie, "The Next War Live?", Shorenstine Center for Press and Politics, Harvard University School of Government, March 1996 Pg 18
- <sup>97</sup> Reston, James, *The Artillery of the Press*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York: Harper & Row, 1967 Pg 57 Full quote from President Johnson continues: "Because we must have no doubt today about the determination of the American men wearing American uniforms, the Marines who are out there fighting in the wet jungles, wading through the rice paddies up to their belts, the sailors who are searching the shores and patrolling the seas, the airmen who are out there facing the missiles and antiaircraft guns, carrying out their missions, trying to protect your liberty. These men are not going to fail us. Now the real question is: Are we going to fail them. Our staying power is what counts in the long and dangerous months ahead..."pg 57
- <sup>98</sup> *Lights Camera War* pg 33
- <sup>99</sup> Heckscher, Melissa, "The Whole World's Converging"
- <sup>100</sup> *Inside Terrorism*, Pg 153
- <sup>101</sup> Dunsmore, Barrie, "The Next War Live?" pg 1
- <sup>102</sup> As Professor Steve Livingston of George Washington Univ points out, "the technology used in Kosovo included use of new MARSAT satellite phones that allow an instantaneous hook up and transmission of data from anywhere in the

world in near real time...Use of commercial remote sensing satellites will allow real time pictures of conflict areas and intelligence as good as that used by the military.”<sup>102</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Nacos, Brigitte L., *Terrorism and the Media*, New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1994 pg 30.

<sup>104</sup> [Former JCS Vice Chief, Admiral Owens, is now the CEO of a Seattle based company called “Teledesic” which has developed a low-band, low earth orbit satellite system capable of data transmission and video streaming which provides the ability for a reporter to transmit live coverage of the battlefield from anywhere in the world. Livingston interview

<sup>105</sup> Bell, J.B. *Columbia Journalism Review* May/June 78 pg 50

<sup>106</sup> Dunsmore, Barrie, “The Next War Live?” pg 1

<sup>107</sup> Aukofer, Frank and Lawrence William P., *America's Team: The Odd Couple*. Nashville: The Freedom Forum 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Center 1995 pg viii

<sup>108</sup> Hastings, Max and Jenkins, Simon, *The Battle for the Falklands*, W.W. Norton & Co NY, 1983 “There was constant speculation about future British intentions, guided by battalions of retired admirals and generals...Any scrap of interesting information, such as the failure of the Argentine bombs to explode, was published without thought for the operational risks”, during the Falklands War Pg 333

<sup>109</sup> Tom Brokaw was concerned about giving away secrets in live unedited context. He said, “God, the last thing I want on my personal conscience or my professional resume is that he caused the death of one, say nothing of 100 or 1000 or 2,000 american lives. Pg2 Dunsmore

<sup>110</sup> Miklaszewski, John, Interview at the Pentagon, 9 Jan 2000 NBC

<sup>111</sup> *Inside Terrorism* Pg 143 hoffman

<sup>112</sup> *stolen valor* pg 112.

<sup>113</sup> *Terrorism and the Media* pg 8

<sup>114</sup> *Inside Terrorism* Pg 142

<sup>115</sup> Pg 142

<sup>116</sup> *Terrorism and the Media* pg 32

<sup>117</sup> Psychological Operations Course, Air Force Special Operations School, Hurlburt

Field, Florida, 5 Dec 1999, Lecture (non-attribution only)

<sup>118</sup> de Caro, Chuck, “Who are we? Where are We Going?”, Organizing for the future of IW Paper Given at an IW Conference, Crystal City, Va, 1997 [ In this example, a Serb statement says, “Support for Yugoslavia, its people and leadership is growing worldwide...” it continues with other propaganda. But the subtle message of “Yugoslavia” to the foreign audience and greater Serbia to the hometown fans should not be lost. Overtime this continue to have an effect.pg 2

<sup>119</sup> Grant, Rebecca, “The Kosovo Campaign: Airpower made it work”, Air Force Association, Arlington Va, 1999 pg24

<sup>120</sup> “Who are we? Where are We Going?”, de caro pg 2

<sup>121</sup> US ARMY Official History of the Mexican War, Audio Tape History, 1964 But, for the first time in the history of warfare, the United States has the ability to win wars without spending very many irreplaceable lives in the process. Why anyone would think that “zero casualties” is not an ideal worth striving for. During the Mexican War, Gen Winfield Scott was ridiculed and Gen Zachary Taylor eventually made president, basically because Taylor lost 5000 men in his Rio Grande Campaign victories and Scott only a few in his conquest of Vera Cruz. Casualties appealed to a hungry public. “Taylor he fights” was the cry. Taylor came out the overall winner. Figure it out?

<sup>122</sup> “The Kosovo Campaign: Airpower made it work”, They were shot at by upwards of 800 SAMS. The AF special ops crews, who rescued a downed F-16 pilot, were shot at by as many as 18 SAMS on just that one pick-up. Just as the biblical David was professional and victorious in accomplishing his mission so were all the airman over the skies of Allied Force, twenty thousand sorties worth. Pg 16

<sup>123</sup> . “Kosovo Analyses: Asking the Right Questions”, *Not to equate the US military's tactics with current approach with Russian tactics, but Chechnya might be a model to look at regarding the risks of 21<sup>st</sup> century ground warfare*.pg 2

<sup>124</sup> “The Kosovo Campaign: Airpower made it work”, pg 53

<sup>125</sup> Gray, Chris Hables, *Postmodern War*, New York: Guilford Press, 1997Postmodern War pg 4

<sup>126</sup> Michael Evans “Dark Victory,” Proceedings, Sep 99 he criticizes the ability of airpower to provide an unambiguous decision in Kosovo, while drawing us into the fantasy of “bloodless war.” “The military ethos,” Evans writes, “itself will not survive if it has no moral purpose and no ethical character beyond remote control attack from the skies. See Washington Post (feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2000) article on bombing civilians

<sup>127</sup> “War stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents”, Pg 100 pedelyt.

<sup>128</sup> George, page 89

<sup>129</sup> *Artillery of the Press*, pg 47

<sup>130</sup> pg 52

<sup>131</sup> Pg 34

<sup>132</sup> Pg 52

<sup>133</sup> *Covering the Next War Live*, Pg 12

<sup>134</sup> *Artillery of the Press* pg viii

<sup>135</sup> Interview with senior military PAO and San Diego Union-Tribune reporter

<sup>136</sup> *Terrorism and the Media* pg 23

---

<sup>137</sup> During the Achille Lauro incident, of the 17 front-page crisis photos in *The New York Times*, none showed President Reagan (who ordered the successful intercept of the terrorist aircraft) or any other administration players. The only pro-administration photo showed the plane intercepted on the tarmac in Italy, but there were many photos of Klinghoffer's widow and coffin arriving in the US. The incident was a great American counter-terrorist coup – yet no coverage. Raid on Libya 14 stories from Washington and 11 in Libya – 26 stories abroad – CBS. The PAN AM 103 crisis was left to flounder for 10 days before President Reagan officially addressed it during his weekly radio address *Terrorism and the Media* pg 23

<sup>138</sup> During the hijacking of the TWA 847 aircraft the Reagan Administration took a wait and see attitude. The result was the news was dominated from Beirut. The same thing happened in the Achille Lauro and in the strike on Libya. *Terrorism and the Media* pg 23

<sup>139</sup> Recent United States Special Operation Command counter-terrorist training exercises in the Pittsburgh, Dallas and Savannah have all been blown up in the press. Congressional inquiries have resulted. It ultimately proved a poor strategy. Personal discussions with congressional staff.

<sup>140</sup> TV Guide, April 15-21, 2000, Max Robins, "Military Interns booted from CNN, NPR

<sup>141</sup> *Artillery of the Press* pg 43

<sup>142</sup> *Covering the Next War Live*, page 4

<sup>143</sup> *Artillery of the Press* Pg 97